

ABSTRACT

THESIS: An Analysis to Determine Framing of the Michael Vick Dogfighting Controversy

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DATE: July, 2009

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This study incorporated the framing theory – specifically, human interest, conflict, episodic, and thematic framing – to show how four newspapers in different regions framed the dogfighting controversy of former National Football League (NFL) quarterback, Michael Vick. Content analysis was conducted to determine if the newspapers’ embedded interest and cultural proximity to him impacted their coverage of the controversy. The results revealed that the type of dominant frames in culturally proximate newspapers to Vick could not be confidently predicted, but that cultural proximity could be a determinant of the amount of coverage a newspaper produces about an individual or event. The findings also indicated that newspapers with embedded interest in the Vick Controversy produced more episodic, human interest frames. In addition, the researcher provided definitions for cultural proximity and embedded interest, based upon previous literature and the study’s results, to extend knowledge in these minimally researched areas.